

Meeting of Secretary Freeman and Bulgarian Prime Minister, Todor Zhivkov, August 6, at latter's summer residence at Varna. (Bulgarians' remarks via interpreter.)

After a picture-taking session in the garden, the group moved to the reception room.

Freeman said, "I am very hopeful that your distinguished minister of agriculture in due time will return our visit." Zhivkov replied, "As far as the demands of the government are concerned, it can be arranged." He went on to discuss international relations. "The prognosis is very good indeed...we have a refreshing improvement in international affairs, and as for agriculture there are no barriers to our collaboration."

F: Exchanges are good for all concerned. I supported them before I came on this trip, but I am even more strongly in support of these exchanges now. There is great value in people of all levels--in and out of government--getting to know each other on a people-to-people basis.

Z: Mrs. Anderson and I have already created certain bases for these exchanges. We signed the first agreement the other day...

There are many things we can learn from your agriculture. The productivity of your agriculture--the productivity of labor--is very high. Costs are low.

F: We have worked very hard for many years, and especially in the last 10 years the rate of production has risen very rapidly.

Z: When I look at the different data, I can see that since 1958 there is a very great increase in productivity in your agriculture.

F: Each year we have been producing more on less land with fewer people...

Z: When our agriculture minister talked to you about Bulgarian agriculture, he has probably talked about the good things only. I personally think agriculture is developing very well. It needs better handling, better leadership. That is the problem: to improve agriculture we need to improve leadership and cope with the caprices of God. The minister is a young man and very energetic. He has been a district leader, and so he is well qualified. But one bird doesn't make a spring.

F: If I may say so, I think you are wise to develop agriculture. Many countries I have visited have neglected it in their development (and so have had difficulties).

Minister Marin Vachkov: Mr. Zhivkov knows all the figures every day. That is why he is always blaming the minister.

Z: We're all specialists in agriculture. Your job (speaking to OLF) is much easier, and I'll tell you why. When we were in opposition, we just discussed what socialism meant--happiness and milk for all. Now we're in power and we can't just discuss. We have to make people feel the reality--that's our difficulty.

F: It's always easier to make speeches than to get things done.

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Z: We are very young--only 21 or 22 (years old). You have been developing your agriculture for many years.

F: We are very fortunate that in the U.S. we have been able to draw from almost every nation. I served as Governor of Minnesota; in that one state, there were people from 44 countries. That mixture is a source of strength...And in the Cabinet of the United States, we have men from humble beginnings, from minority groups. One came to the United States as a poor Italian immigrant.

Z: You are making good progress in your agriculture, especially with corn. You receive over 40 centners per hectare.

F: Yes, on the average, in our major corn producing areas we get up to 70 centners per hectare.

Z: Last year we got 23, but we'll reach your production next year--and we'll overhaul you in 1965.

Vachkov: (after some discussion of sorghum) I would like to take some seeds from the United States.

F: We will arrange that. You are very welcome. Anything we have learned in the United States about agriculture that might help your people we would be glad to share with you. Agriculture is the No. 1 peaceful operation.

Z: (mentioned the problem of having to grow many different varieties of plant because of different soils, saying that it deters mechanization).

F: There is a lot of specialization in the United States, but also a good deal of diversification. For example, in the corn belt many farmers grow some wheat. They raise hogs and cattle, and they may also have milk cows.

(At one point in this preliminary discussion, Z mentioned the fact that some Bulgarian tobacco is exported to the U.S. through third parties. He said that in international trade, "when the front door is closed, you go in the window.")

At the luncheon table, there was the usual exchange of toasts:

Z: It's a great pleasure to welcome you. For all our guests who come to Bulgaria, we open our hearts. We appreciate this visit of Mr. Freeman, and think it is a visit of good will and good intentions. That is why we greet Mr. Freeman on behalf of the government and all the people of Bulgaria.

This is the first visit in many years on a high level on the part of an American. This visit is of particular importance because it coincides with another event, with an event of great importance--the signing of the treaty for partial banning of atomic tests.

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At our first meeting with Mrs. Anderson, we shared the opinion that we should work to develop good relations, that we should like to overcome this standstill in the development of our relations. We see no reason why they should not develop, but of course we are ready to wait, because not everything depends on us. We can wait one, two, five, twenty, or even fifty years. Bulgaria can live without America, and the other way about--America can live without Bulgaria. But countries of different social systems can have good relations and I want to express my wish again for further expanding relations, and developing commerce between America and Bulgaria. I send my best wishes to your President Kennedy--it is my personal desire.

There is a very wrong idea in the West about these countries in agriculture, including Bulgaria. It is a result of the West's unfriendly propaganda. And very often, they draw conclusions from the temporary difficulties we meet in agriculture. In Bulgaria, we still have certain difficulties in supplying our people that we have not solved. But I know of no nation without state subsidies for agriculture. Our rural economy also exists on these. (We said agriculture receives 18 million leva out of a current budget of 4 billion leva.) Our task for next year is to liquidate these subsidies so that in 1965 or 1966 our state farms can contribute to the budget. So if you come after four or five years, you will find a very different agriculture...We are not inclined to compare with the past, but with what other advanced countries now have. So we want to continue to collaborate, and we are very grateful for your help.

As about differences in our social systems, well, these are things well-known to every child. So even if you organize 50 more exhibitions of plastics, they will not destroy our system.

(In actually proposing the toast, Zhivkov again expressed his wish for closer relation between the two countries.)

Freeman toast (excerpt): We have profited from visiting and discussing with your minister and his associates, and I congratulate you on the progress you have made in agriculture. You have been very generous in your comments about American agriculture. Our system is of course somewhat different--but we feel very thankful that 8 per cent of our population is able to feed our people at very low cost and to make available to people around the world each year two billion dollars' worth of food. This very day, 35 million children have had a school lunch with American food. I want you to know that if there is any knowhow in American agriculture valuable to you, we will make it available for the asking. Ideas know no boundaries...

I was also pleased to note your comment that the plastics exhibition was a success. The exchange of ideas of all kinds is a healthy thing. Competition is one of the rules of life, and that includes competition of ideas. And from that competition new knowledge and new information is made available through the test of ideas competing with one another. We have appreciated the actions under your government making available more ideas and more information in exchanges.

I want to bring you the warm regards of President Kennedy and the American people. And I am honored to bring him your greetings. I share your conviction

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that the recent agreement in Moscow, though limited, is a very important step. People everywhere in the world yearn for a future in which peace and progress can be accomplished without the threat of war. There are many paths by which such a future can be achieved, but one of the most important is the exchange of peoples, information and ideas. Differences tend to melt away when people know each other personally as individuals.

Z: I must say that Madame Anderson contributes to mutual understanding (he also said that much of the credit for improved relations should go to the working diplomats in Washington and Sofia). We do not believe we have conquered you (won you over) for the Bulgarian cause, any more than you have conquered us for the American cause. But, although I have only been prime minister for a year, in my opinion the American government has found in the person of Madame Anderson an outstanding representative...

Mrs. Anderson: ...It is quite true that we have different systems, and I don't try to conquer Bulgaria, and I don't think you try to conquer us. I only want to improve relations. I think in the past year we have taken steps to improve relations, which as you say had unhappily been at a standstill. But now we have made a new beginning-- as President Kennedy says about the United States, 'We've got things moving again'-- and I know that could not have happened without your cooperation and your assistance.

Place: Daxinograd Palace

Also present: Stanke Todorov, Deputy Prime Minister